

## KODIAK AREA

### **PROPOSAL F2003-7**

**Existing regulation:** Kodiak Area - King crab

§\_\_\_\_.28(k)(4)(iv)(A) *The annual limit is six crabs per household; only male king crab may be taken or possessed;*

**Proposed regulation:**

§\_\_\_\_.28(k)(4)(iv)(A) *The annual limit is ~~six~~ **three** crabs per household; only male king crabs **seven inches or greater in width of shell** may be taken or possessed;*

**Reason for changing the regulation:** In 1997, Alaska State subsistence shellfish regulations changed the limit for king crab subsistence harvest in Kodiak area waters from six to three crab per household per year. The State had a shell width restriction already in place of 7 inches or greater. The State reduced the subsistence and sportfish king crab harvest due to the continued depressed population of king crab found in this area. The Federal Subsistence Board did not change to the same harvest limit as the State in 1997. They did however, close the Federal waters around Kodiak to the harvest of king crab to all, except Federally-qualified subsistence users. The king crab population is still recovering from the collapse of the commercial king crab fishery in the 1980's. The State of Alaska adopted this reduced subsistence and sport harvest to further assist in the recovery of this crab population. Enforcement of these changes by State and Federal enforcement personnel has been very difficult since the new rules have come about for Federal waters. This change would allow for a simplification of the regulations and a decrease of confusion to the users, and enforcement personnel.

**Effect of change on fish or shellfish populations:** King crab populations will continue to increase as harvest pressure decreases. Less immature crab will be harvested, which should allow for an increased king crab population recovery rate.

**Table 1:** King Crab Harvest and Population Estimates for Kodiak Island Area Waters 1996 -2000 (ADF&G 2002)

Year	#Harvest Chiniak B.	#Harvest Alitak B.	#Harvest Other Areas	Total Harvest	Pop. Est. Chiniak B.	Pop. Est. All Areas
1996	204	252	64	520	6,315	94,359
1997	94	175	32	301	3,560	183,128
1998	56	154	32	242	21,992	155,947
1999	48	140	24	212	40,748	93,283
2000	63	145	37	245	2,916	188,026
Ave	93	144	38	304	15,106	142,949

*Pop. Est. = Population Estimate for Chiniak Bay and All Other Areas*

**Effect of change on subsistence users:** In the short term, this change will decrease the number of king crabs that will be allowed in possession or can be harvested for Federal subsistence users. This change will bring Federal subsistence users in line with State users. In the long term this may allow crab populations to grow to a point where bag limits can be increased.

**Additional Information:**

**Proposed by:** Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, Kodiak